



Guidance for a Safer Halloween and Dia de los Muertos During the COVID-19 Pandemic

October 12, 2020

The COVID-19 virus continues to circulate in communities in Sonoma County causing severe illness, hospitalizations and deaths among our residents. Individuals can spread COVID-19 even without symptoms. The virus spreads through droplets created by coughing, sneezing and talking, through aerosols caused by normal breathing and through virus particles on hard surfaces.

This ongoing risk requires everyone to follow necessary precautions. Reducing close contact with individuals outside your household, wearing proper face coverings, practicing hand hygiene, and staying home when not feeling well are all important measures to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Many traditional holiday activities promote congregating and mixing of households, which increase the risk of transmitting COVID-19. For this reason, Sonoma County Public Health recommends that you choose a safer alternative way to celebrate Halloween and Dia de los Muertos and strongly discourages traditional trick-or-treating. It is important to plan early and identify safer options.

HALLOWEEN

Higher Risk Activities That Are Not Permitted. Do not participate in the following activities which are prohibited by local or state public health orders:

- Halloween gatherings, events or parties with non-household members are not permitted, except outdoor gatherings of no more than 12 people, and no more than 3 households, and with compliance with social distancing, face coverings, and hygiene requirements.
- Carnivals, festivals, live audience entertainment, and indoor haunted house attractions are not allowed.

Higher Risk Activities That Are Strongly Discouraged. Avoid these higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19:

- Door to door trick or treating is strongly discouraged because it can be very difficult to maintain proper social distancing on porches and at front doors, ensure that everyone answering or coming to the door is appropriately masked to prevent disease spread, and it involves touching high contact surfaces such as doorbells and candy bowls.



- Business to business trick or treating is strongly discouraged because it will attract more individuals to retail establishments that are required to limit store capacity, will result in more congestion outside the storefront, and will decrease the store's ability to ensure proper face coverings and social distancing.
- "Trunk or treating" where children go from car to car instead of door to door to receive treats is also strongly discouraged since it is difficult to avoid crowding and sharing food.

Safer Alternatives That Are Permitted and Encouraged. The safest way to celebrate Halloween is to spend time with people in the same household or to celebrate virtually. Some specific alternatives that are low risk include:

- Online parties/contests (e.g. costume or pumpkin carving)
- Car parades that comply with public health guidance for vehicle based parades including:
 - Drive by events or contests where individuals dress up or decorate their vehicles and drive by "judges" that are appropriately physically distanced.
 - Drive through events where individuals remain in their vehicles and drive through an area with Halloween displays.
 - Drive in events where individuals can receive a treat bag (limited to commercially packaged non-perishable treats) or take away item from an organizer while the participants remain in their vehicle.
- Halloween movie nights at drive in theaters (must comply with the state drive in movie theater guidance <https://covid19.ca.gov/industry-guidance/#movie-theaters-entertainment>).
- Halloween themed meals at outdoor restaurants (must comply with the state restaurant guidance <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-outdoor-restaurants--en.pdf>).
- Halloween themed art installations at an outdoor museum (must comply with the state museum guidance <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-outdoor-museums--en.pdf>).
- Dressing up homes and yards with Halloween themed decorations.
- Seasonal outdoor activity such as a pumpkin patch, where use of face coverings and hand sanitizer is enforced and people are able to maintain social distancing.
- Outdoor, drive-through haunted houses.

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS



Higher Risk Activities That Are Not Permitted. Do not participate in the following activities, which are prohibited by local or state public health orders:

- Dia De Los Muertos gatherings, events or parties with non-household members are not permitted, except outdoor gatherings of no more than 12 people, and no more than 3 households, and with compliance with social distancing, face coverings, and hygiene requirements.
- Carnivals, festivals, live audience entertainment, and indoor events are not allowed.

Safer Alternatives That Are Permitted and Encouraged. The safest way to celebrate Halloween is to spend time with people in the same household or to celebrate virtually. Some specific alternatives that are low risk include:

- Preparing traditional family recipes for family and neighbors and delivering them in a way that does not involve contact with others.
- Playing music in your home that your deceased loved ones enjoyed.
- Working with members of your household to decorate your home with images and objects to honor your deceased loved ones.
- Making and decorating crafts or making an altar for the deceased.
- Setting out pillows and blankets in your home for the deceased.
- Joining a virtual get together.
- While wearing a face covering, visiting and decorating graves of loved ones with household members only and keeping more than six feet away from others who may be in the area.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES:

Regardless of how you choose to celebrate Halloween and Dia De Los Muertos, it is important to keep the following in mind:

- Correctly wear a cloth face covering to prevent disease spread when outside your home and around others that are not part of your household. Plastic, rubber, vinyl and other Halloween costume masks are not acceptable substitutes for cloth face coverings to prevent COVID-19 spread.
- Outdoors is safer – Actively stay away from indoor spaces that do not allow for easy distancing of at least six feet between you and others.
- Avoid close contact – Stay at least six feet away (3 or more adult steps) or more from all other people who are not part of your own household, especially while talking, eating, drinking, singing, chanting, shouting, or dancing.
- Wear a facial covering while preparing or serving food to others who don't live in your household. Limit people going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as in the kitchen or around the grill.



- Avoid any self-serve food or drink options. If serving any food, consider having one person serve all the food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
- Wash or sanitize your hands often.
- Clean high touch items regularly.
- If you are sick, or you have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 please stay home and away from others.
- Get tested for COVID-19 if you are sick, you have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID -19 or have regular contact with others outside your household due to work, shopping or social activities.

Review the State Guidance for Private Gatherings for more public health safety recommendations: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CDPH-Guidance-for-the-Prevention-of-COVID-19-Transmission-for-Gatherings-10-09.aspx>